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i Source: [Labour Force, Australia, August 2020](#)

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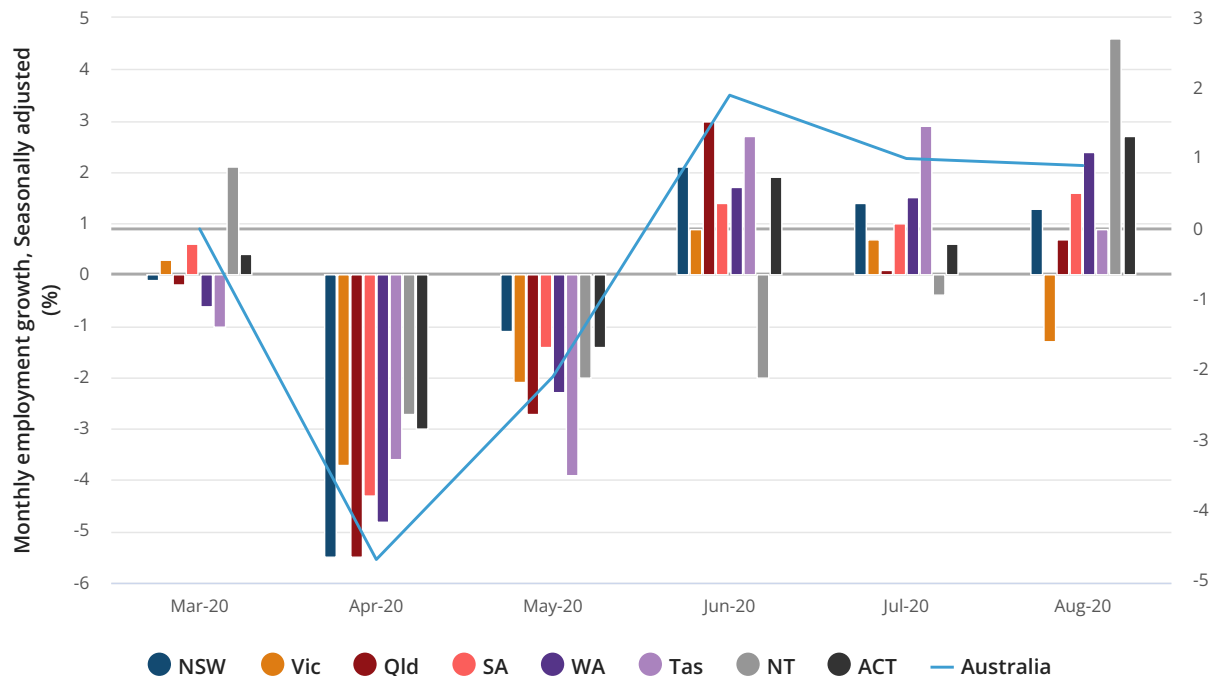
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Until August, many of the changes in employment and hours worked had been broadly similar across states and territories. However, the Stage 4 restrictions in Melbourne (and Stage 3 restrictions in regional Victoria) during August resulted in a divergence in labour market outcomes between Victoria and the rest of Australia. This article highlights the changes in employment and hours worked across all the states and territories since March 2020, as well as comparing Victoria to the rest of Australia.

Employment

In seasonally adjusted terms, all states and territories recorded a decrease in employment in both April and May. In June and July, all states and territories saw increases in employment except the Northern Territory. In August, the Northern Territory recorded the largest increase (up 4.6%), while Victoria was the only state or territory to record a decrease (down 1.3%) (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Monthly employment growth, States and territories, Seasonally adjusted



Source: 6202.0 Table 12 and Table 12a

Chart 2 compares the change in employment since March in Victoria with the rest of Australia, as an index. In April and May, employment in Victoria decreased at a slower rate than the rest of Australia. By June and July, the relative fall in employment was comparable with the rest of Australia. However, following the re-introduction of restrictions in August to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in Victoria, there was a divergence between Victoria and the rest of Australia, with employment decreasing by 1.3% in Victoria and increasing by 1.7% in the rest of Australia.

Chart 2: Employment index: March 2020 = 100.0, Seasonally adjusted



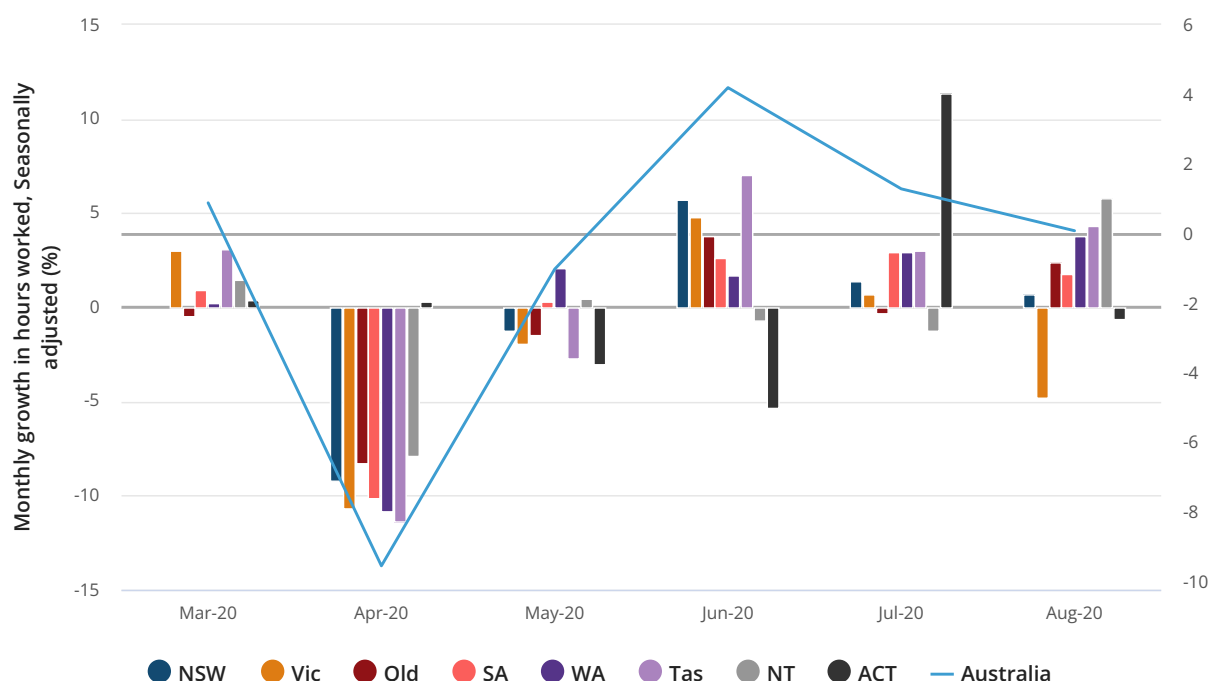
Note: As states and territories are seasonally adjusted independently, the sum of all states and territories does not equal the seasonally adjusted estimate for Australia. As a result, the 'Rest of Australia' series in this graph has been calculated by subtracting Victoria from Australia.

Source: 6202.0 Table 12 and Table 12a

Hours worked

Chart 3 shows that after a similarly large decrease in seasonally adjusted hours worked across most of the states and territories in April and May, hours recovered in most states and territories in June and July. In August, Victoria recorded a large decrease (down 4.8%), while most other states and territories recorded increases (except for the ACT, which recorded a slight decrease, following a large increase in July).

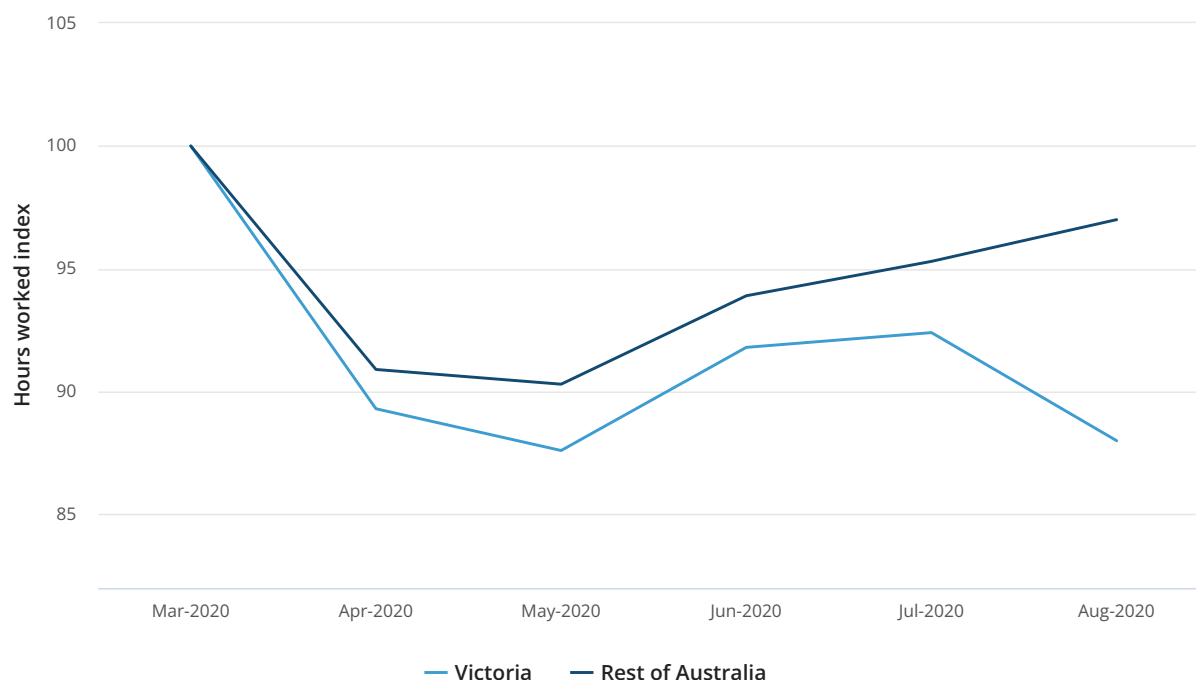
Chart 3: Monthly growth in hours worked, States and territories, Seasonally adjusted



Source: 6202.0 Table 19 and Table 19a

Chart 4 compares the change in hours worked since March in Victoria with the rest of Australia, as an index. Hours worked in Victoria declined by more than the rest of Australia between March and May, before starting to recover at a similar rate between May and June. Into July, hours worked increased slightly in Victoria (up 0.7%) and increased by 1.5% in the rest of Australia. By August, the difference was pronounced, with hours worked decreasing by 4.8% in Victoria, compared to a continued rise in the rest of Australia (up 1.8%).

Chart 4: Hours worked index: March 2020 = 100.0, Seasonally adjusted



Note: As states and territories are seasonally adjusted independently, the sum of all states and territories does not equal the seasonally adjusted estimate for Australia. As a result, the 'Rest of Australia' series in this graph has been calculated by subtracting Victoria from Australia.

Source: 6202.0 Table 19 and Table 19a

Table 1 shows the number of people (and share of all employed) working zero hours for economic reasons in each state or territory (in original terms). All states and territories recorded very large increases in people working zero hours for economic reasons between March and April, followed by a steady decrease in the months to July. Between July and August, some states recorded modest increases, while in Victoria the number (and share) of people working zero hours for economic reasons almost doubled.

Table 1: People working zero hours for economic reasons, by State and territory, Original

Aug-20	Jul-20	Jun-20	May-20	Apr-20	Mar-20
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	Aug-20		Jul-20		Jun-20		May-20		Apr-20		Mar-20	
	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% of all Employed	('000)	% Empl
NSW	45.8	1.1%	41.6	1.0%	63.7	1.6%	121.2	3.1%	261.2	6.7%	30.8	
Victoria	113.0	3.5%	65.6	2.0%	80.7	2.5%	102.8	3.2%	229.8	6.9%	22.7	
Queensland	26.2	1.1%	28.4	1.2%	51.0	2.1%	64.9	2.8%	126.9	5.2%	12.0	
SA	10.1	1.2%	9.5	1.1%	11.6	1.4%	23.5	2.9%	48.0	5.8%	4.5	
WA	15.7	1.2%	15.4	1.2%	17.7	1.4%	42.0	3.3%	69.2	5.3%	4.8	
Tasmania	2.7	1.1%	3.8	1.5%	4.5	1.8%	9.1	3.8%	16.8	6.7%	1.4	
NT	0.5	0.4%	0.8	0.6%	1.3	1.0%	2.3	1.7%	5.1	3.8%	0.3	
ACT	1.4	0.6%	0.8	0.3%	1.6	0.7%	2.2	0.9%	10.0	4.3%	0.0	
Australia	215.3	1.7%	165.9	1.3%	232.2	1.9%	367.9	3.0%	766.9	6.2%	76.5	

Source: 6291.0.55.001 Data Cube EM2b

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